

# SHAKA ZULU'S LINKAGE OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS: AN EARLY FORM OF OPERATIONAL ART?

A Monograph

by

MAJ Calvin R. Allen

United States Army



School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

AY 2014-001

Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE					Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Executive Service Directorate (0704-0188). Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.						
<b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ORGANIZATION.</b>						
<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 22-05-2014		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master's Thesis		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> JUL 2013 - MAY 2014		
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>  SHAKA ZULU'S LINKAGE OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS: AN EARLY FORM OF OPERATIONAL ART?				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>  		
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>  		
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>  		
				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>  		
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>  CALVIN R. ALLEN MAJOR, USA Engineer				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>  		
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>  		
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD 100 Stimson Ave. Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>  		
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>  				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>  		
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>  		
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b>  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited						
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>  						
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> Shaka Zulu was successful in establishing Zulu dominance in southern Africa because he was a great strategist and military innovator. His political objective was to expand his territory with the unification of neighboring clans and war was the primary means used to achieve this. His employment of tactics to achieve strategic objectives is reminiscent of operational art as it relates to the arrangement of military forces in time, space, and purpose. In order to achieve his political objectives, Shaka reorganized his clan, developed an intelligence network, and employed new tactics and strategies in his quest to form a new system of war thus allowing him to change the society and the nature of warfare in southern Africa. Shaka became the military architect of southern Africa unification. Through the application of his innovative tactical actions and weapons, Shaka expanded his territory from a local district of a few hundred square miles to thousands of square miles. This was achieved by his unique ability to transform a small volunteer army of approximately 400 men to a standing army of 70,000 highly trained and disciplined soldiers. His victorious military campaigns against other clans culminated with the creation of the Zulu empire in just ten years.						
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> SHAKA ZULU, EARLY FORM OF OPERATIONAL ART, ZULU WAR TACTICS						
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>		<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE	UU		48	
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>  			
						<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b>  

Reset

## MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

Name of Candidate: MAJ Calvin R. Allen

Monograph Title: Shaka Zulu's Linkage of Strategy and Tactics: An Early form of Operational Art?

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Monograph Director  
Christopher Marsh, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Seminar Leader  
Charles M. Evans, COL, FA

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies  
Henry A. Arnold III, COL, IN

Accepted this 22nd day of May 2014 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author, and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency.

## ABSTRACT

SHAKA ZULU'S LINKAGE OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS: AN EARLY FORM OF OPERATIONAL ART, by MAJ Calvin R. Allen, US Army, 41 pages.

Shaka Zulu was successful in establishing Zulu dominance in southern Africa because he was a great strategist and military innovator. His political objective was to expand his territory with the unification of neighboring clans and war was the primary means used to achieve this. His employment of tactics to achieve strategic objectives is reminiscent of operational art as it relates to the arrangement of military forces in time, space, and purpose. In order to achieve his political objectives, Shaka reorganized his clan, developed an intelligence network, and employed new tactics and strategies in his quest to form a new system of war thus allowing him to change the society and the nature of warfare in southern Africa. Shaka became the military architect of southern Africa unification. Through the application of his innovative tactical actions and weapons, Shaka expanded his territory from a local district of a few hundred square miles to thousands of square miles. This was achieved by his unique ability to transform a small volunteer army of approximately 400 men to a standing army of 70,000 highly trained and disciplined soldiers. His victorious military campaigns against other clans culminated with the creation of the Zulu empire in just ten years.

After his death, other Zulu leaders emulated Shaka's system of organization, tactics, and the strategies he employed. These tactics were so successful that they remained the main offensive tactics employed by the Zulus until their defeat at the hands of the British in 1879. This monograph concludes that Shaka Zulu provided a blueprint for mastering the complexity of military affairs through tactics and effective strategy that is reminiscent of what is today considered operational art.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my monograph director Dr. Christopher Marsh for his continued support and encouragement in my completion of this assignment. You have been a tremendous mentor to me during my time at SAMS. Likewise, Dr. Robert Tomlinson, I offer you my sincere appreciation for your mentorship as well and for encouraging my research topic. Your voice of reason when needed has been priceless. I would also like to express my special appreciation to Colonel Charles M. Evans, my seminar leader, for the learning opportunities you provided.

My completion of SAMS and this monograph could not have been accomplished without the support of a few of my classmates: LTC Jackie (Jack) East, Major Michael (Jody) Shouse, Major Jeffrey (Jeff) Quail, Major Tim Lynch, Major Albert (Al) Olagbemi, and Major Matthew (Matt) Metcalf. Thanks to all of you for your encouragement and above all your friendship.

Finally, to my caring, loving, and supportive wife, Shalia. Thanks for your willingness to shoulder the burden of managing our household activities while I completed the hectic workload associated with being a SAMS student. Please accept my heartfelt thanks.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY/LEGEND.....	vi
ILLUSTRATIONS .....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Western World and Africa’s Past .....	3
Zulu Clan before King Shaka.....	5
Shaka the Unwanted .....	6
Shaka – King of the Zulu .....	10
SHAKA’S MILITARY METHOD AND TRADITIONAL WARFARE .....	11
Military Strategy of King Shaka .....	15
Military Genius and New Tactics .....	16
Shaka’s Strategy.....	19
SHAKA BATTLE IN CIVIL WAR UNIFICATION .....	21
First Major Zulu War with the Ndwandwe Clan (1818).....	22
Second Major Zulu War with Ndwandwe Clan.....	27
Were Shaka’s Innovations Long Lasting? .....	30
THE ZULU AND THE BRITISH WAR OF 1879 .....	32
The British Invade Zululand .....	33
The Zulu and British Armies .....	34
Zulu War Tactics versus the British Modern Army.....	36
CONCLUSION .....	37
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	40

## GLOSSARY/LEGEND

abakwaZulu	People of Zulu
amaButho	Zulu military age group regiments
Ishaka	An intestinal beetle usually blamed for menstrual irregularities
Oofakani	The crushing
Umuzi	Homestead
Imip-sbomvu	Total war
amaWombe	Warriors
izimPohlo	The bachelor's brigade
uFasimb	The haze
impondo zankomo	Bullhorn formation
Impi	An armed body of men
Ibutho	Zulu regiment
Kraal	African village huts; homestead

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Graph of King Senzangakhona Lineage .....	7
Figure 2: Portrait of King Shaka, Founder of the Zulu Nation.....	8
Figure 3: Shaka’s Assegai .....	10
Figure 4: Shaka’s Regimental Color-Coded Shields.....	15
Figure 5: The Battle of Gqokli Hill .....	23
Figure 6: Phase I (Deployment) of the “Bullhorn” .....	25
Figure 7: Phase II (Assault) of the “Bullhorn” .....	25
Figure 8: Phase III (Encirclement) of the “Bullhorn” .....	26



“Battle is the means of the operation. Tactics are the material of operational art. The operation is the means of strategy, and operational art is the material of strategy.”  
— A. Svechin, *Strategiia*

## INTRODUCTION

In the early nineteenth century, the legendary Zulu warrior, Shaka Zulu, emerged as a leading figure in the military and political state of affairs in the Zulu Kingdom of southern Africa. Born out of wedlock to a father who was the Chief of the Zulus, his clan exiled him at a young age. Shaka Zulu eventually returned upon his father's death to claim his place as the Chief of the Zulus. Under his leadership, he built a mighty army of Zulu soldiers, and subsequently conquered and united several tribes to form a powerful Zulu Kingdom. As a leader, he placed emphasis on military organization and skills. He devised and drilled his soldiers in battle tactics, strategy, and obedience. He introduced a system of conscription, and divided his soldiers into regiments called *Ammabutu*. With his army, Shaka changed the nature of warfare in southern Africa from a minimal loss of life amongst enemies into total destruction of the enemy on the battlefield.

The expansion of his armies caused a ripple effect across the southern areas of Africa, incorporating more clans into the Zulu Kingdom. Military innovations such as the *assegai* (Zulu thrusting spear) and the *impondo zankomo* “bullhorn” attack formation enabled Shaka's army to surround and annihilate his enemies. The innovative tactics and military reforms of Shaka Zulu facilitated the success of Shaka's unification of neighboring clans and Zulu dominance throughout southern Africa. Despite military reforms and successes in all his campaigns, most historical writer's label Shaka as a tyrant, bloodlust, savage, and barbarian who launched a wave of violence across southern Africa. Nevertheless, he created the Zulu nation and is widely acknowledged to have demonstrated the traits of military genius for his time, traits that can be linked to the application of military operational art.

While the exact origin of operational art remains controversial, there are two theories that continue to spur debate at the US Army School of Advanced Studies (SAMS). The first theory

argues that operational art began with Napoleon, and the second theory gives credit to the US Civil War as the origin. Despite not knowing the exact origin, there is less of a controversy as to the meaning of operational art. These two schools of thought focus their theories on interpretation of current US Army doctrine, which defines operational art as “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”<sup>1</sup>

Leading up to the nineteenth century, the term “operation” referred to military activities that involved, but were not limited to campaigns, routes of march, foraging and supply, and what was traditionally referred to as strategy, arguably became operational art. The focus of this monograph is to answer the following question. Given our current understanding of operational art, was Shaka Zulu’s employment of tactics to achieve his strategic objectives reminiscent of operational art as it relates to the arrangement of military forces in time, space, and purpose?

The methodology to answer the thesis and answer the above question focuses on analyzing key factors of Shaka’s successful leadership. Four distinct perspectives characterize the following analysis. The first section provides the basis for Shaka’s military ambitions based on his childhood experiences. The second section focuses on Shaka influence on Africa’s traditional warfare and the principles for his military reform and success during his campaigns. Section Three answer the question whether Shaka Zulu’s employment of tactics to achieve his strategic objectives is reminiscent of operational art as it relates to the arrangement of military forces in time and space. The final section exemplifies Shaka’s lasting principles of war and warfare in Africa.

---

<sup>1</sup>US Army, Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 9.

### The Western World and Africa's Past

The Western world knows less about Africa's past than anywhere else on earth. This could be due to the scarcity of written records, but could also be the Western world's ignorance based on a colonial mindset or Africa's ties to slavery. Whatever the case, Europeans have been trading in southern Africa since the sixteenth century and had well established outposts on the African coast. On the west coast, first the Dutch and later the British controlled the city of Cape Town. Trade was a catalyst that transformed the Zulu from a small clan under local chieftains to a major regional power. The third decade of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of the Zulu clan into a centralized state, which amounted to a politically organized region dominated by the Zulu royal family and the Zulu military systems.<sup>2</sup>

The Portuguese had a trading post at Delagoa Bay placing them closer to Zulu territory than either the Dutch or the British in Cape Town. In exchange for ivory, cattle, and slaves, the Portuguese and other European traders supplied Africans with copper, brass, textiles, and beads. By the end of the eighteenth century, rival ethnic groups began to compete more aggressively for access to trade routes that linked them to Delagoa Bay. The Africans viewed trade with the Portuguese as vital for local power and influence. Small chieftains were in danger of larger clans destroying them in the fight for goods to trade with the Europeans. Out of this turmoil emerged a leader, Shaka – King of the Zulu, who changed Zulu and African history forever. In the space of twelve years during the early nineteenth century, he transformed the small Zulu chieftains into a large and powerful military force.

The effects from Dutch pressure on the western African frontier by the end of the eighteenth century created a population problem. Subsequently, pressures within the southeastern

---

<sup>2</sup>Adam Kuper, "The House and Zulu Political Structure in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History* 34, no. 3 (1993), 496.

regions of Africa made the domination by one single ruler inevitable.<sup>3</sup> The population coupled with poor economic conditions caused widespread social upheaval. In the 1830s, descendants of the original Dutch settlers, now called “Boers,” migrated into the interior of South Africa and came into conflict with the Zulu. The battles with the Boer settlers continued well into the late 1800s, but never truly threatened Zulu sovereignty. Eventually, the Zulu came into conflict with the British Army as it expanded its control over southern Africa, invading the Zulu homeland in the process.

Under Shaka’s leadership, the Zulus were victorious in each of their battles against native clans. Through strategic military conquests, the Zulus were successful in uniting the various clans of southern Africa, creating the strongest African nation in the nineteenth century. The Zulu’s territory doubled in the years of Shaka’s rule, and experienced a boom in population resulting from increased alliances.<sup>4</sup> Shaka introduced a systematic reorganization of the military, and revolutionized his army’s weaponry and military tactics. He organized the Zulu army into regiments, and incorporated a rigid training program. The training program consisted of a new battle formation, the “bullhorn,” designed to disrupt and encircle enemy forces. This innovative tactic increased Zulu power, and by 1820, the Zulu effectively ruled eastern South Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Before discussing Shaka’s political and military achievements as applied to operational art, better understanding of the environment and the Zulus is required. In writing this paper, it was not possible to include each event and every individual involved in the reign of Shaka, the Zulu King. The author exercised judgment to exclude many secondary events in order to provide contextual information that illuminates Shaka’s achievements as applied to operational art.

---

<sup>3</sup>Brian Roberts, *The Zulu King* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1974), 41.

<sup>4</sup>Ian Knight, *Brave Men’s Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War* (London: Greenhill Books, 1990), 54.

<sup>5</sup>Donald R. Morris, *The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation Under Shaka and its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 38.

Fortunately, many books and articles are readily accessible to assist in providing a full understanding of Shaka Zulu, who many historians refer to as Africa's "black Napoleon."

### Zulu Clan before King Shaka

Before becoming an empire under Shaka's rule, at the end of the 1700s the Zulus were a small clan consisting of a few hundred people, known only to their immediate neighbors.<sup>6</sup> The Zulu clan was part of a larger group of people called the Nguni (Zulu's ancestors), who in the 1600s, as part of the Bantu migrations, migrated south from central East Africa. By the mid to late 1600s, descendants of these Bantu settlers politically and socially controlled two-fifths of the land suitable for agriculture in southern Africa.<sup>7</sup> Two groups emerged as overlords over weaker neighboring clans: The Ndwandwe clan of Chief Zwide KaLanga to the northwest and the Mthethwa clan of Chief Dingiswayo Kajobe of the southeast.<sup>8</sup>

Both the Ndwandwe and Mthethwa were strong militarily, and other clans gravitated towards them for protection. Once the small Zulu clan migrated south, the Zulu chief, Chief Senzangakhona, formed an alliance with the larger Mthethwa clan. At the time, the Mthethwa clan numbered 4,000 people and was firmly emplaced on good land.<sup>9</sup> The Mthethwa controlled the eastern portion of southern Africa until the mid-1800s when a larger clan assimilated them. Eventually, the Mthethwa clan would become the Zulu clan.

Numbering no more than 1500 people, most of which were herders, the Zulus spent most of the eighteenth century in relative insignificance.<sup>10</sup> Daily life for the men consisted of tending

---

<sup>6</sup>Ian J. Knight, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa: Shaka of the Zulu, Moshoeshe of the Basotho, Mzilikazi of the Matabele, Maqoma of the Xhosa* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 1995), 14.

<sup>7</sup>Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson ed., *The Frontier in History: North America and South Africa Compared* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 19.

<sup>8</sup>Ian Knight, *The National Army Museum Book of the Zulu War* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2004), 6

<sup>9</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 40.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

the cattle and performing the heavier tasks around the homestead. The women were responsible for household duties and the cultivation of crops.<sup>11</sup> Until the nineteenth century, the Zulus rarely took part in warfare, which was infrequent and largely bloodless due to their small population. When disputes arose, often over grazing rights, warfare took the form of jeering and throwing spears to see which clan could throw the furthest. Once a clan was determined the winner, the defeated clan would simply move in search of new land.<sup>12</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, with the population growing, the Zulu were still a minor clan. The Zulu's chieftain, Senzangakhona, established the Zulu throne in the years when the Xhosa clans collided with the Boers to the south.<sup>13</sup> He established an official royal court giving the Zulus leadership greater legitimacy. He established an army, that while relatively weak, would become the starting point for his eldest (although illegitimate) son to overturn the fortunes of both the Ndwandwe and Mthethwa clans in his great military expansion.

### Shaka the Unwanted

Despite his accomplishments, Senzangakhona's (Figure 1) single, historical, significant accomplishment was meeting and mating with a woman named Nandi from the small neighboring eLangeni clan.<sup>14</sup> Their love affair culminated with the conception of a child that Senzangakhona, himself, attempted to hide, going so far as to term the pregnancy a work of *iShaka* – an intestinal parasite.<sup>15</sup> In 1787, Nandi gave birth to a baby boy named Shaka.<sup>16</sup> After giving birth to

---

<sup>11</sup>Ian Knight, *The Zulus* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1989), 5.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>13</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 43.

<sup>14</sup>Senzangakhona had a fourth son, Sigujana, who was meant to succeed him, but died shortly before Shaka's return to be crowned King of the Zulus.

<sup>15</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu King*, 34.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

Senzangakhona's second child and enduring years of mistreatment by the Zulus, the chief exiled Nandi and her children. Shaka, his infant sister, and Nandi left the Zulu clan and sought refuge with the eLangeni clan. Shaka was six years old. The reception of Nandi back into the eLangeni clan was similar to the treatment she received from the Zulus. Shaka's treatment was worse; he was often teased for being an illegitimate child and was denied food by most of the clan's people. "A heavy famine struck the area in 1802, and Nandi was evicted from the eLangeni clan."<sup>17</sup>

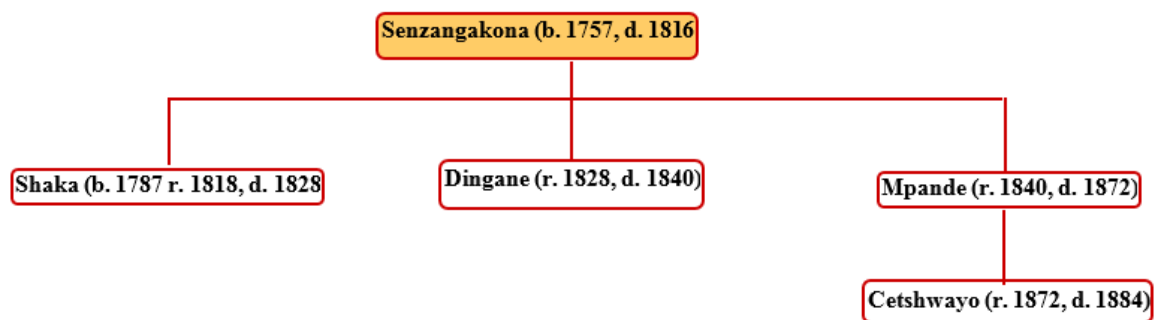


Figure 1: Graph of King Senzangakhona Lineage

Source: A.T. Bryant, *Old Times in Zululand and Natal* (C. Struik, Cape Town, 1965), 35

Nandi and her children eventually found shelter among the Mthethwa clan. There, Shaka suffered bullying from boys who resented his chiefly descent. He grew up lonely and revengeful, ambitious, ruthless, and determined to overcome all opposition.<sup>18</sup> By age fifteen, Shaka had grown into a fierce and intimidating warrior, putting an end to the bullying. Entering manhood, Shaka was tall and powerful, and his ability to easily master skills set him apart from others his

<sup>17</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 45.

<sup>18</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu King*, 35.

age. At full growth (Figure 2) Shaka measured six feet, three inches with a heavy muscled build in due proportion.<sup>19</sup>

At the age of twenty-three, the Mthethwa clan drafted Shaka into their army where he received military training that tested his courage and thinking.<sup>20</sup> Mthethwa soldiers, conscripted into regiments, were a disciplined force with each regiment distinguished by its dress and the color of its shields.<sup>21</sup> Shaka's courage attracted the attention of the Mthethwa king, Dingiswayo, who mentored Shaka in the hopes of using him as an advantage over other clans. King Dingiswayo sought to build alliance with other clans with his own as the central power. His policy was to use persuasion where possible and force when necessary.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 2: Portrait of King Shaka, Founder of the Zulu Nation

Source: Brian Roberts, *The Zulu King* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 149.

---

<sup>19</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 46.

<sup>20</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu King*, 37.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>22</sup>Mazisi Kunene, *Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic* (London: Heinemann, 1979), 15.



Based on Shaka's war like propensities, it did not take long for him to become a commander of his own regiment in King Dingiswayo's army. As a commander in the Mthethwa army, Shaka became engrossed in problems of strategy and battle tactics. Shaka argued that the policies of persuasion did not produce lasting peace, but rather provided an opportunity for the enemy to regroup and build new alliances.<sup>23</sup> Shaka added that an enemy must be totally defeated, and its fragments incorporated into a common nationhood.<sup>24</sup> Maintaining a strong military was thereafter to be a way of life for Shaka, and he was prepared to use it aggressively to inflict his will on thousands of others.

He envisioned an army's ability to perform effectively in close combat. To optimize his regiment's effectiveness in close-quarters combat, Shaka redesigned the traditional throwing spear. He devised and commissioned a short stabbing spear with a long double-edge blade (Figure 3), which he called *assegai*, later giving it the nickname, *iKlwa*.<sup>25</sup> This gave Shaka's regiment an advantage over the traditional long spear used by others when fighting in close combat. The close combat use of the assegai was more effective in inflicting casualties than the long spear traditionally used for throwing at the enemy. The introduction of the assegai made the long spear a secondary weapon, used only for the initial Zulu attack when the enemy was out of the assegai's deadly range.<sup>26</sup> Shaka also redesigned the shield, making it bigger and more durable. He taught his regiment, and later the Zulu army, the necessary techniques for using their shield to hook and pull the enemy shield, exposing the body to allow ease of penetration by the assegai.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup>Kunene, *Emperor Shaka the Great*, 18.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu King*, 43. The nickname *iKlwa* stems from the sound the assegai makes as it plunges into and pulled out from the victim's body. The blade measured thirteen inches long, mounted on a thirty-inch wooden shaft and wrapped with dyed calfskin and wood twine.

<sup>26</sup>Ian Knight, *Isandlwana 1879: The Great Zulu Victory*, ed. Lee Johnson and David G. Chandler (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 26.

<sup>27</sup>John Laband, *The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation* (London: Arms & Armor, 1997), 37.



Figure 3: Shaka's Assegai

Source: <http://greywolf.critter.net/images/ironclaw/akoma/weapons> (accessed 25 October 2013).

Using the shield in such manner transformed it from purely defensive into an offensive implement. Discipline, speed, and close quarters combat became the trademark of Shaka's regiment. Convinced that speed was a decisive factor in war, Shaka ordered his soldiers to discard their sandals, making them train in bare feet to ensure greater speed and mobility. On average, Shaka's soldiers ran twenty to thirty miles a day with bare feet over rugged country to build stamina and speed.<sup>28</sup> It would take Shaka some time to perfect his military system, so it remained in its infancy while he was with King Dingiswayo's Mthethwa Army.

#### Shaka – King of the Zulu

The Zulu chief, Senzangakhona (Shaka's father), died in 1816. Shaka at the time was twenty-nine years old.<sup>29</sup> Upon the death of his father, King Dingiswayo released Shaka from the military, and sent him to the Zulu *kraals* (African village of huts; dwellings within a homestead) to seize the throne. Upon seizing the throne, his first act was to avenge the terrible treatment of his mother from members of the Zulu and eLangeni clan. After killing the Zulus who wronged his mother, he took his new army to the eLangeni clan homeland, surrounded their kraal, and systematically killed those who had wronged him. His method of punishment involved sticking those who had wronged him on a post around the kraal and giving their cattle to all those who

---

<sup>28</sup>Knight, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa*, 48.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 45.

helped him. After this, he returned to the Zulu capital and began his reconstruction of the Zulu clan.

In Africa at the time, for clan chiefs to attract and retain support, they needed to demonstrate their capability to provide for their clan. The first two things on Shaka's agenda were to increase food commodities and establish the Zulu's political power relative to other clans through the use of its military. Unlike his mentor, King Dingiswayo, who sought to build alliances using persuasion where possible, Shaka saw the Zulus exerting power over others with military might. Shaka envisioned using the military to create a political structure that took away loyalties from local chieftains and refocused them on the king.<sup>30</sup> This he would accomplish through his military innovations and restructuring of the Zulu army. Shaka's military innovations and ambition allowed the Zulus to forever leave the ranks of sleepy, upcountry clans and commence their march to greatness.<sup>31</sup>

#### SHAKA'S MILITARY METHOD AND TRADITIONAL WARFARE

Before Shaka, warfare in Africa was a ritual activity guided by a strict moral code that limited the scale of physical destruction against the enemy. The role of the environment, particularly the elements comprising of demographics, terrain, weather, and disease, influenced traditional African warfare. According to John Lamphear, an academic at the University of Texas specializing in African's military history, traditional African warfare demonstrated four key factors that appeared in varying degrees of consistency across the region: Control of people and resources instead of territory; utilization of numerically small forces; conducting raids instead of engaging in protracted conflicts; and rudimentary logistics.<sup>32</sup> Of these four key factors, the control

---

<sup>30</sup>Knight, *Isandlwana 1879*, 23.

<sup>31</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 49.

<sup>32</sup>John Lamphear, *African Military History* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 45.

of people and resources was more important than the control of territory in determining the nature of African conflict.<sup>33</sup>

The manner in which war itself was fought, “developed in many interim stages of ritual confrontation before the actual physical fight started.”<sup>34</sup> These included the exchange of ambassadors of good will whose task was to persuade the enemy camp against the folly of declaring war; ritual dance in which the best dancers of the opposing camps competed (the party that won the dance competition, won the war); selection of the best fighter from both sides (the winner won the war for his side); and use of the long throwing spear (the final stage of the confrontation)<sup>35</sup>

If the throwing of spears during the final stage ran out before the enemy admitted defeat, the enemy would declare himself the victor. It was considered immoral if the winner attempted to pursue the defeated army. One of Shaka’s maxims was to follow the defeated enemy ruthlessly, and put the fear of Shaka into him.<sup>36</sup> With such a fundamental principle about war, Shaka easily concluded that the conduct of traditional war fighting was not war.

From the time the Mthethwa Army drafted him, Shaka was critical of the traditional way of fighting. Shaka viewed war as a bloody battle ending with the total destruction of enemy forces. According to Shaka, “in war, strike an enemy once and for all. Let him cease to exist as a clan or he will live to fly at your throat again.”<sup>37</sup> Shaka added, “If there must be war, let it be

---

<sup>33</sup>Jeremy Black, *War in the Modern World Since 1815* (London: Routledge, 2003), 172.

<sup>34</sup>“Great African Military Leaders: Shaka of the Zulu Nation,” 29 November 2010, <http://kwanzaaguide.com/2010/11/great-african-military-leaders-shaka-of-the-zulu-ation/> (accessed 26 October 2013).

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: Rise of the Zulu Empire*, 7th ed. (London: Longmans, 1962), 47.

<sup>37</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: The Biography of the Founder of the Zulu Nation* (London: Penguin Books, 1955), 65.

*impi-ebomvu* – total war. But treat generously those who submit without war.”<sup>38</sup> Dingiswayo’s policy of war remained one of traditional conciliation, which was attaining a favorable outcome with minimum bloodshed. As such, “Dingiswayo’s innovations were to provide Shaka with both the knowledge and the organization he required to realize his own, more bloody ambitions.”<sup>39</sup>

As the newly appointed King of the Zulus, Shaka’s first practiced operational art by reorganizing the traditional military system within the Zulu clan. Shaka instituted a regimental system that began the task of perfecting the battle concept he started as a commander in Dingiswayo’s army. “It is estimated that he had less than four hundred adult Zulu males at his disposal.”<sup>40</sup> Shaka reorganized his small military force into four distinctive age restrictive regiments (*amabutho*) that would make up a larger whole.<sup>41</sup> He appointed a commander in each regiment, and issued the regiments the lighter, shorter, stabbing spears (*assegai*) and larger stronger shields. Subsequently, each regiment was identified by the color and marking of their shield (Figure 4), and were assigned herds that had matching hides symbolic of that particular regimental shield. These herds eventually provided the color-coded hides necessary as the need for replacement shields arose.<sup>42</sup> The introduction of the color-coded hides system was an

---

<sup>38</sup>Shaka lived up to this when he became king. All those tribes who submitted to his hegemony remained in undisturbed possession of their lands, but had to furnish their quota of warriors. Source: Ritter, *Shaka Zulu*, 65.

<sup>39</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu King*, 42.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>41</sup>Shaka separated his four regiments by age. Older married men under the age of forty made up the *amaWombe* regiment. Men in their twenties and thirties formed the two other regiments. Men old enough to have the *isiCoco* made up the first of the two regiments. These men had to remove their headrings and were forbidden to marry. Men of the same age having not yet donned the headring comprised a separate regiment. Together, these two regiments were the *izimPohlo*. The final regiment of Zulu youths was called *uFasimba* and was trained in Shaka’s methods of warfare. Brian Roberts, *The Zulu King* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), 47.

<sup>42</sup>The shields were about five feet tall and two feet six inches wide with a stout stick at the back held in place by two rows of parallel hide lacing. The youngest regiments carried black shields, the number and size of white patches increased with experience until senior regiments carried all white shields. Red, dun-colored, and sparkled grey (white and black hair intermixed) shields were also carried. Source: Ian J. Knight, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa*, 45-46.

important innovation that allowed Shaka to easily identify his regiments and provide command and control during battle. The regiments were instructed to use the bullhorn formation battle tactics (this form of tactics will be discussed in more detail further in this narrative), which were designed to take full advantage of the assegai's lethality in close combat, using the most experienced fighter in the front and the least experienced as the reserve.

In addition to male regiments, Shaka incorporated female regiments into his military organization. The female regiments acted as supplementary units should there be a need to evacuate the Zulu clan to a safer location in time of war. Shaka ensured that the women were well trained in the use of the assegai, and were as fierce in executing their duties as the male regiments. Female commanders governed all of Shaka female's regiments.<sup>43</sup> The regiments were strong enough to defeat equal numbers and defend against superior forces until reinforced. Each regiment could march on its own and meet the rest of the army at the objective. Shaka's regimental concept became the army of armies in southern Africa that would overwhelm all opposition.

---

<sup>43</sup>Ron Lock and Peter Quantrill, *Zulu Victory: The Epic of Isandlwana and the Cover-Up* (London: Greenhill Books, 2002), 60.

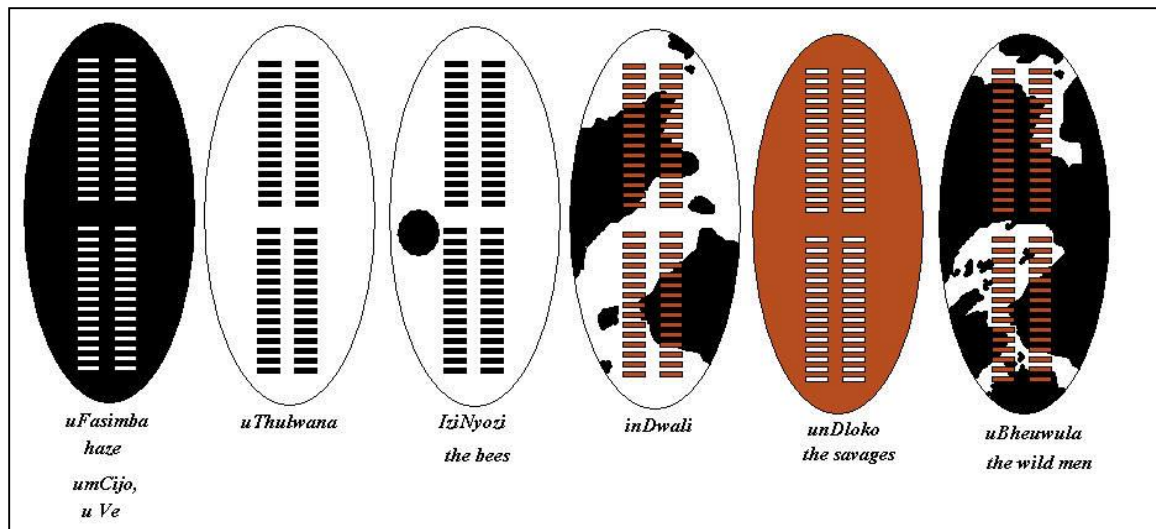


Figure 4: Shaka's Regimental Color-Coded Shields

Source: <http://milblogging.com/listingDetail.php?id=5280> (accessed 25 October 2013).

### Military Strategy of King Shaka

Both the Zulu clan and the army were highly centralized, requiring a dynamic personality at the head to keep both functioning – especially in the early years when there was no inherited weight of tradition.<sup>44</sup> Shaka believed Zulus were superior to other clans, and he instilled these beliefs into the minds of the Zulus. As the king, it was important to win the Zulu's confidence. Cited in "kwanzaa guide," Shaka proclaimed that hence forth the army would be recruited and stationed in separate villages, named according to their assigned regiment. Each regiment would have its own distinguishing colors and its own identifying song and war cry. All privileges were abolished. Each man or woman would rise to the highest position in the country based on merit, not according to birth, as was the previous case. There would be no distinction between original Zulus and foreign Zulus – those incorporated into the Zulu clan. All loot seized from the enemy

---

<sup>44</sup>Knight, *The Zulus*, 17.

would belong to all the fighting members of the army. The highest law that would govern the nation would be that of sharing the resources, and a common fate in peace and war. The old members of society would be retired and given their due respect for their services. Above all, discipline and order should prevail in all Zululand.<sup>45</sup>

From the start, Shaka maintained an iron grip on his kingdom. On not only the people, but the land would also be incorporated into the Zulu Kingdom. In so doing, he created a sense of single nationhood among the Zulus and those incorporated into the Zulu clan.

### Military Genius and New Tactics

In expressing his view on the nature and conduct of war, Clausewitz took into consideration the human element. His treatment on the impact of the human factor is laudable, especially as it relates to the commanding general. According to Clausewitz, a genius is a combination of intellect (or the gift of mind) and temperament. It encompasses courage, strength of body and soul, coup de oeil, determination, presence of mind, energy, staunchness, strength of mind or character, firmness, and the faculty to grasp topography.<sup>46</sup> Clausewitz further stipulated, “We will never find a savage who is truly a great commander and very rarely one who would be considered a military genius, since this requires a degree of intellectual power beyond anything that primitive people can develop.”<sup>47</sup>

If Clausewitz’s interpretation of a savage is the same as how the Europeans in general viewed Africans during Shaka’s era, then his stipulation of a genius could not be more incorrect. As mentioned earlier, prior to Shaka, war in Africa involved little maneuver. Shaka changed

---

<sup>45</sup>“Great African Military Leaders: Shaka of the Zulu Nation”  
<http://kwanzaaguide.com/2010/11/great-african-military-leaders-shaka-of-the-zulu-ation/>(accessed 26 October 2013).

<sup>46</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 100-101.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.



Africa's war tactics with his innovative *impondo zankomo* "bullhorn" formation. One of the key features of Shaka's bullhorn innovation on the operational level is that it brings to bear his military capabilities to his disposal. Moreover, Shaka realized that attacks from three sides were effective both physically and morally. Physically, his bullhorn tactics forced the enemy to fight non-linearly, creating exploitable gaps. Envelopment is the desired end state of the bullhorn tactics and Shaka's transition to operational art because it creates a psychological effect on the enemy.

The morale effect of Shaka's bullhorn tactics is the unnerving psychological impact it had on the enemy that it encircled. Shaka understood that an encircled enemy becomes filled with fear because there is no way to escape. To display his bullhorn concept, Shaka divided his army into four sections. "The main body, constituting the *isifuba* (chest) supported by the *unuva* (loins), a reserve regiment; two other regiments were deployed as the *izimpondo* (horns), which advanced and encircled the enemy."<sup>48</sup> This military tactic became the central fighting technique of the Zulu Army. Its operational structure allowed Shaka to organize his effort rapidly and effectively, something his army easily understood.

In battle, the chest (main body) consisted of the most mature and experienced soldiers who closed with the enemy front and fixed them while the two horns (flanking force) consisted of young soldiers who were experienced in battle and who struck the flanks to envelop the enemy. When the tips of the horns met, they combined to attack from the enemy's rear. The loins, composed of inexperienced and older soldiers, remained as the reserve force facing away from the battle to avoid becoming too anxious and reinforcing too soon.<sup>49</sup> For relief measure, Shaka

---

<sup>48</sup>Clausewitz, 45.

<sup>49</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 50.

employed young boys to act as supply carriers and employed doctors to tend the wounded.<sup>50</sup> He used young boys to carry weapons and provide food service to ensure freedom of action, extend operational reach, and prolong endurance. Shaka provided command and control of the bullhorn formation from a point of advantage, controlling each section with young boys acting as foot messengers.<sup>51</sup>

Shaka's strategy when employing his bullhorn tactics was ingenious. Shaka realized when using tactics to encircle an enemy it was necessary to mass combat power in time and space. His initial attacks went against small clans that he could easily encircle. This allowed his soldiers to apply pressure quickly from multiple directions, which eroded morale and cohesion of the enemy, resulting in a decisive victory. Shaka offered the survivors the choice to join his ujarmy or face death. Most chose to join, and in doing so, gave up their own clan affiliation. These new soldiers would receive training in the Zulu art of warfare before their integration into a regiment. By the end of the first year under his command, his army ranks grew to two thousand soldiers.<sup>52</sup>

Without good intelligence, military actions can lead to blind attrition rather than the desired strategic end. Knowing about one's enemy, feeds planning which is essential to the commander as he links his strategy to tactics. In his explanation of a commander, Sun Tzu regards a commander as the keeper of knowledge who should never reveal his plans or intention to his troops. Sun Tzu believed "it is essential for a general to be tranquil and obscure, upright and self-disciplined. He alters his management of affairs and changes his strategies to keep other from recognizing them."<sup>53</sup> As a safety mechanism, Shaka concealed the object of his campaign

---

<sup>50</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 45.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>52</sup>Roberts, 49.

<sup>53</sup>Sun-Tzu, *The Art of War*, Trans. Ralph D. Sawyer (Boulder: Basic Books, 1994), 222.

and potential route until the time of the march. As a common practice, Shaka's parting speech to the army gave a direction different from that which they would actually take.

To aid in his planning and preparation for war, Shaka developed an intelligence network that was legendary. He seldom embarked on a campaign without thoroughly assessing the strength, disposition, and the intention of his enemy.<sup>54</sup> Shaka's intelligence network helped his understanding and visualization of the operational environment, enemy, and terrain. Through this intelligence network, Shaka was able to make well-informed decisions and initiate events within his kingdom to suit military operations. Additionally, during war, his intelligence network operated ahead of his scouts to locate hiding places of supplies such as corn and cattle. Passwords were established and disseminated as means for Zulu soldiers to distinguish friends from foe when on the march or while encamped. At the operational level where the commander must translate strategic objective into tactical action, Shaka use of intelligence supports the concept operational art.

### Shaka's Strategy

Shaka had a two-pronged military strategy. His first strategy was to build the Zulu nation, which he interpreted as building a powerful and efficient military. He was mindful that he would have to build his military discriminately so to not be considered a threat to Dingiswayo.<sup>55</sup> Second, he would need to establish political and social group identity to bind together clans and nations. Shaka maintained that to achieve a powerful military he had to change the traditional thinking of war. His introduction of weapons and new military tactics allowed the Zulu Army to evolve into a fierce and deadly fighting force. He created a fundamental sense of a single nation where none existed before. Shaka did this through allocating positions of command by merit rather than by

---

<sup>54</sup>Knight, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa*, 44.

<sup>55</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 52.

family affiliation or national origin.<sup>56</sup> Shaka's strategy meant swift orientation from a traditional society to a well-organized and well-disciplined modern society.

Shaka's second strategy was to consolidate neighboring clans into one Zulu nation. Realizing the danger in forming military regiments from conquered clans, Shaka adopted Dingiswayo's policy and organized his regiments based on age.<sup>57</sup> In his building of a nation, Shaka dealt with disorder among new clans by taking swift punitive action against a troublesome chieftain. For small matters, Shaka intervened as a judge, and in a sense, created a court that constantly busy reviewing disputes. "Seldom had a day gone by without an execution, often on the flimsiest of pretexts, at his court."<sup>58</sup>

Shaka was a military genius for his reforms and innovations in the art of war. He changed the nature of warfare in Africa from an exchange of taunts and spear throwing, producing minimal loss of life into close combat warfare. Together with his bullhorn tactics, the combination of assegai and shield, Shaka inflicted crushing defeat upon his enemies. Once reorganized, the Zulu society was entirely structured to support the Zulu Army. The military became Shaka's tool to shape and lay the foundation for the Zulu Kingdom. Shaka's reforms enabled the Zulu Army to operate as a swift effective machine that conquered powerful clans across southern Africa. Shaka practiced operational art because he held military and diplomatic power in his hands and could directly tailor military actions to his strategic aims. First, he introduced a system based on merit from which he achieved a nationally motivated army. Second, he provided the means to raise, equip, maneuver, and sustain a large army.

---

<sup>56</sup>Kunene, 21.

<sup>57</sup>Ian Knight, *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army: From Shaka to Cetshwayo, 1818-1879* (London: Stackpole Books, 1995), 32.

<sup>58</sup>Knight, *Brave Men's Blood*, 22.

## SHAKA BATTLE IN CIVIL WAR UNIFICATION

It did not take long for the newly appointed King Shaka to become engaged in a military conflict. The first Zulu battle against a more powerful army occurred in 1818 while Shaka was still in the early stage of establishing his place as the Zulu leader. Under the guidance of Chieftain Zwile, the Ndwandwe Army invaded Zulu territory. In fighting the Ndwandwe Army, Shaka devised several plans that demonstrated the superiority of his military concepts that he had been building since becoming the Zulu king. His tactics demonstrated a new principle in fighting an enemy by infiltrating his enemy's organization and understanding his every move, strength, and weakness. The battle of Gqokli Hill, where Shaka chose to make his stand against Zwile's Army, put the greatest test to his military evolution. The battle ended with the retreat of Zwile's army. This defeat caused the disintegration of the Ndwandwe clan, and became the benchmark of Shaka's military courage and tactical genius. It is regarded as a hinge event in the rise of Zulu power.

Prior to the Ndwandwe army's invasion of Zulu territory, Chieftain Zwile was defeated in combat by the Mthethwa Army and Zwile became Dingiswayo's prisoner of war. Keeping with traditional warfare practice, Dingiswayo released Zwile back to his clan. The second war between Dingiswayo and Zwile came as a result of seeking revenge after his humiliating defeat from the first war. Determined to teach Zwile a second lesson, Dingiswayo mobilized his three regiments, each six-hundred strong (1,800 in total) to move against Zwile's capital.<sup>59</sup>

With the aid of Shaka's Army, Dingiswayo's defeated Zwile's army for the third time and Zwile, again, became Dingiswayo prisoner of war. Zwile's casualties were 500 killed in action with an equal number wounded out of a total force of 25,000.<sup>60</sup> Dingiswayo's casualties

---

<sup>59</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: The Biography of the Founder of the Zulu Nation*, 59.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 63.

were less than a third of Zwide's. Despite Shaka's plea with Dingiswayo to kill Zwide, Dingiswayo, for the third time, released Zwide based on his promise to acknowledge supremacy and to refrain from attacking his neighbors unless approved by Dingiswayo.<sup>61</sup> A few months later, Zwide killed Dingiswayo during his visit to Zwide's kraal to settle a dispute. Within months, Shaka absorbed Dingiswayo's clan into the Zulu clan. With these new additions, Shaka mustered an army of eight full regiments, each 1,000 strong.<sup>62</sup> Shaka's increased military strength aroused Zwide's concern, and not liking the presence of Shaka's power, he invaded Shaka's territories, which now included the Mthethwa clan since the death of Dingiswayo.

#### First Major Zulu War with the Ndwandwe Clan (1818)

In April of 1818, Zwide's Army of 10,000 soldiers came into contact with Shaka's Army of 4,000 soldiers. Outnumbered, Shaka established defensive positions at the summit of Gqokli Hill along the banks of the White Mfolozi River (Figure 5). The use of scout screens forward gave Shaka superior situational awareness of the battlefield. This enabled him to establish key defensive positions along the riverbank. Upon arriving at the Mfolozi River, "Zwide's Army found the river still running high, although not in spate, due to the late rains."<sup>63</sup> The river could only be easily forded at two places due to the high running water at the selected battle site where Shaka had already established his defense. Although greatly outnumbered, Shaka's defensive force was able to hold the enemy by lining the riverbanks and killing them as they struggled against a fast and treacherous current at the crossing sites.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: The Biography of the Founder of the Zulu Nation*, 129.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>63</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: Rise of the Zulu Empire*, 120.

<sup>64</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu Kings*, 51.

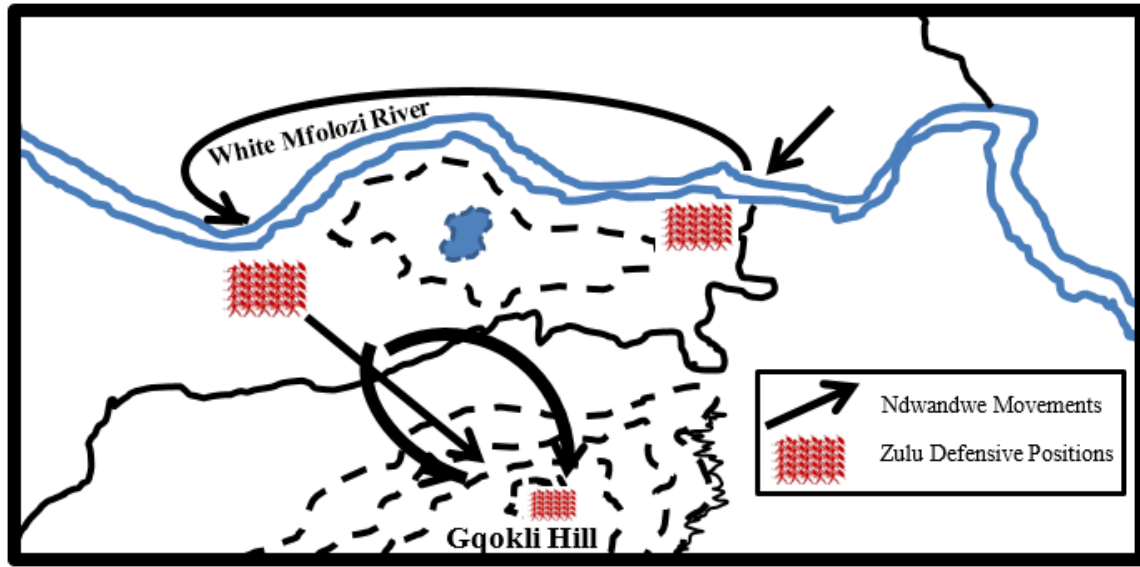


Figure 5: The Battle of Gqokli Hill

*Source:* Author's depiction from multiple sources. The Battle of Gqokli Hill, Shaka's first major victory over the Ndwandwe using his art of warfare, differed significantly from traditional African warfare.

The terrain surrounding Gqokli Hill featured boulders that denied Zwide's army the ability to advance rapidly up the hill. With the enemy force outnumbering his army, Shaka chose to match the breadth of Zwide's army with a defensive ring some five or six ranks deep on the Gqokli hilltop.<sup>65</sup> In the course of battle, each attempt made by Zwide's Army to assault the hilltop was unsuccessful based on Shaka's understanding of the battlefield. Shaka moved his forces to achieve a position of advantage in relation to the enemy position.

The higher up the hill Zwide's army climbed, the narrower their front became; by the time Zwide's army reached the wall of the Zulu, his advanced troops were so tightly bunched together that their movements were severely restricted.<sup>66</sup> Using deceptive maneuvering, Shaka's army was able to attack Zwide's army as they assaulted the hill with close combat tactics from

<sup>65</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: Rise of the Zulu Empire*, 120.

<sup>66</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu Kings*, 51.

unexpected directions. The short stabbing spear made Shaka's army more effective in close combat than their opponent's longer spear.

After numerous failed attempts, Zwide decided to use a non-linear, three-pronged formation to break the Zulu's defense (Figure 5). The main effort of Zwide's army formed a column as they came close to the summit. Zwide's army, armed only with throwing assegais and forced on by the press from below, was neither prepared nor positioned to withstand a frontal attack.<sup>67</sup> In response to Zwide's three-pronged attack, Shaka employed his "bullhorn" tactics (Figure 6) with the desired end state of enveloping Zwide's army.

During Phase I (Deployment) of the bullhorn formation, the chest element made contact with elements of Zwide's army in a direct frontal attack. As this occurred, both horns maneuvered (Phase II - Assault) to flank the enemy formation on both sides (Figure 7). In employing this tactic, the terrain and boulders surrounding Gqokli Hill made it difficult for Shaka to maintain force integrity. To overcome the terrain, Shaka relied heavily on flanking maneuvers against Zwide's columns of assault forces. Relying on speed, Shaka lured Zwide's columns of assault forces forward by engaging to disrupt their cohesion and then retreating. This caused Zwide's forces to give chase making it possible for Shaka forces to maneuver around their flanks and encircle them (Phase III - Encirclement). Once the enemy forces were encircled via the combination of the chest and both horns (Figure 8), the loin element reinforced units already engaged. It then began pursuit, in reaction to new situations as they developed.

---

<sup>67</sup>Roberts, *The Zulu Kings*, 51.



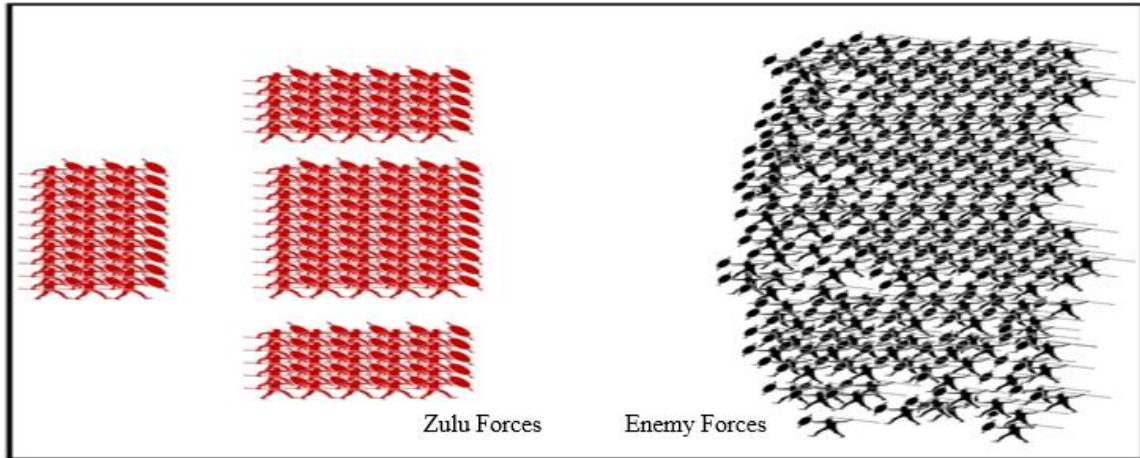


Figure 6: Phase I (Deployment) of the “Bullhorn”

Source: [http://www.huntribe.com/battlefield\\_lessons\\_gqokli\\_hill\\_2.htm](http://www.huntribe.com/battlefield_lessons_gqokli_hill_2.htm) (accessed 26 October 2013).

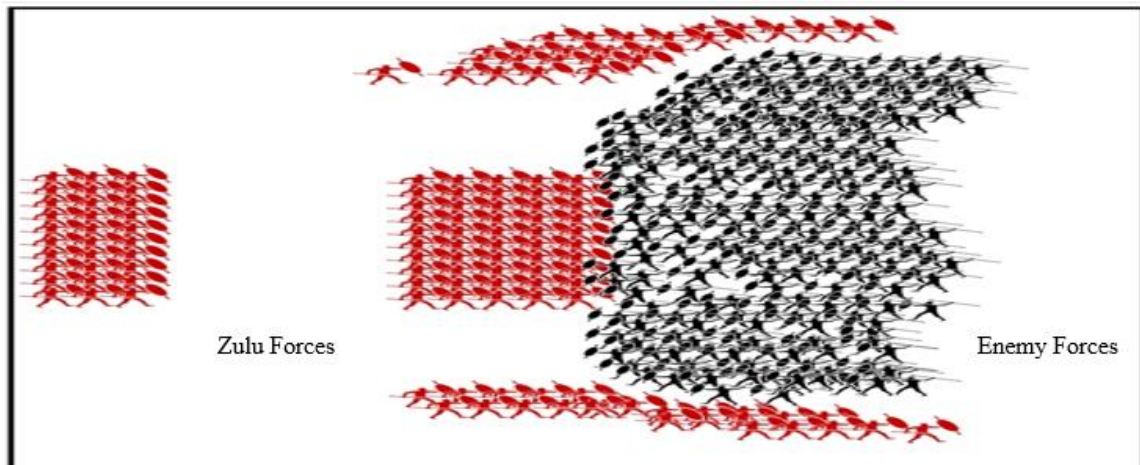


Figure 7: Phase II (Assault) of the “Bullhorn”

Source: [http://www.huntribe.com/battlefield\\_lessons\\_gqokli\\_hill\\_2.htm](http://www.huntribe.com/battlefield_lessons_gqokli_hill_2.htm) (accessed 26 October 2013).

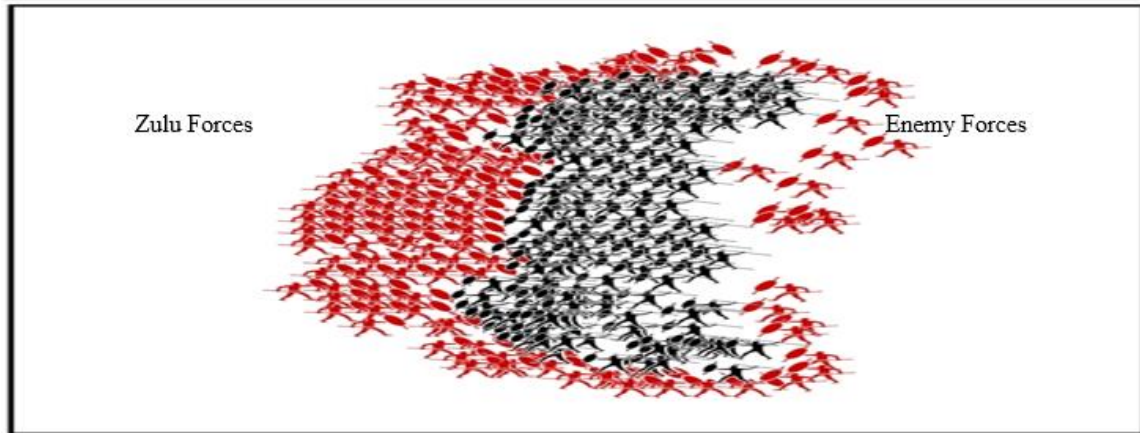


Figure 8: Phase III (Encirclement) of the “Bullhorn”

Source: [http://www.huntribe.com/battlefield\\_lessons\\_gqokli\\_hill\\_2.htm](http://www.huntribe.com/battlefield_lessons_gqokli_hill_2.htm) (accessed 26 October 2013).

Central to the battle was elements of the bullhorn formation operating in concert, maneuvering and assembling faster than the enemy’s ability to threaten a key position of advantage. As the battle developed, a running fight erupted as Zwide’s army attempted to regroup and reinforce elements from both sides. The loin joined the battle. In the end, only 1,000 of Zwide’s soldiers escaped the final Zulu encirclement. Though indecisive, Shaka was able to defeat a numerically superior army with his strategy and tactics.<sup>68</sup> Linking of Shaka’s strategy with tactical actions, the synchronization of his forces in depth, and maintaining continuous pressure on Zwide’s army are all conceptual parts to operational art. Despite his defeat, Zwide remained a strong presence in the region and in the following year, invaded Zulu territory once more.

---

<sup>68</sup>Ron Lock and Peter Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, 51.

### Second Major Zulu War with Ndwandwe Clan

In 1819, Zwide and Shaka's armies engaged in war for the second time. By this time, Zwide's army had adopted Shaka's battle tactics and weapons. This forced Shaka to change his operational and tactical approach. It was common practice for an army on the march to provision themselves by foraging grains and cattle, and Zwide's army was no exception as they expected to do this while in Shaka's territory. Based on information gained through his vast intelligence network, Shaka prepared for war by relocating resources vital to Zwide's army momentum.

Anticipating that Zwide's army would attack after grain harvest, Shaka ordered all inhabitants living within forty miles to carry their grain in bags he provided, and store them in remote caves.<sup>69</sup> Shaka kept only sufficient food for current needs at every kraal. He then ordered the evacuation of all livestock within a radius of forty miles the day before Zwide's army started its march into Zulu territory. Shaka's action demonstrated operational art based on his understanding of logistics, and its connection to Zwide's army's ability to maintain offensive actions and sustainment. Zwide's army was 18,000 strong as it crossed into Zulu territory. At the end of the first day, Zwide's army camped. Its leaders were puzzled having only made visual contact with Zulu scouts. Based on common practice that replenishments would come from the full granaries of the Zulus, Zwide's army departed their home base with only three days of supplies.<sup>70</sup> The reality was grains were not obtainable anywhere, and the absence of livestock had an eerie and depressing effect on Zwide's army. This was the effect Shaka intended to achieve.

On the second day of their march into Shaka's territory, the one hundred oxen that Zwide's army brought with them for food trailed in the rear of their formation. Realizing the opportunity to inflict greater distress on the enemy, Shaka ordered one of his regiments to attack

---

<sup>69</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: Rise of the Zulu Empire*, 183.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 185.

the rear of the formation, seizing the enemy's oxen. The Zulu achieved this by making use of defiles and attacking at dusk when Zwide's army stopped to camp. Cold and hungry, Zwide's army grew confused as to why they had not yet made contact with Shaka's main army. Concerned that Zwide's army would turn back due to hunger, Shaka placed a large number of his oxen at a point where they could be heard by Zwide's hungry army. Hearing the cry of the oxen, scouts from Zwide's army went to pinpoint their location. Shaka ordered his forces not to impede the scout's movement. Central to Shaka's operational art was deceiving Zwide's army for as long as possible as to his campaign's real objective and defeating Zwide's army by exploiting its interior lines.

Shaka then unfolded his first offensive action against Zwide's army. His objective was to create panic among Zwide's army by disrupting their sleep, aiming to cause confusion. According to Ritter, he sought to do this by:

Giving his raiding party counter-signs so that they could identify each other in case of doubt. This consisted of the doubtful one saying to the one whom he accosted, "Ndwandwe!" The reply would be "Qobolwayo!" Failing to answer correctly, would result in the stabbing of the accosted one. If the reply "Qobolwayo" were forthcoming, the first speaker would clinch matters by also saying "Qobolwayo."<sup>71</sup>

As the campfires of Zwide's army died down, Shaka's raiding party moved to disrupt and cause confusion. In the midst of confusion, Zwide's army suffered few casualties and most were self-inflicted.<sup>72</sup>

The Zulu raiding party cost Zwide's soldiers their well needed night's rest. As they began to retreat in the early morning due to exhaustion and hunger, Shaka's main army attacked. The battle lasted for two days and, in the end, Zwide's army was defeated. Shaka led his reserve seventy miles to Zwide's kraal, and ordered his men to sing a Ndwandwe victory chant as they

---

<sup>71</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: Rise of the Zulu Empire*, 190.

<sup>72</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 63.

approached in the dark.<sup>73</sup> Unaware of Shaka's deception, Zwide's royal kraal came out to greet the returning warriors. By the time they figured out Shaka's deception, it was too late. Zwide once again escaped, but eventually died years later, far north from Zululand. This resulted in the destruction of the Ndwandwe Kingdom, ultimately giving Shaka absolute control over the heartland of Nguni. With Chieftain Zwide (the Zulu's strongest rival) neutralized, Shaka consolidated his power and focused his army on defeating and absorbing the clans to his south and west. Shaka's ability to move his force swiftly over vast distance, to shift units from one objective to another, and combine separate elements for decisive action is conceptual to operational art.

By 1824, Shaka had eclipsed his rivals, extended his influence, and possessed land and power far beyond any of the regional kings that preceded him.<sup>74</sup> Shaka's genius in war was his ability to synthesize and exploit the development of others. As a gifted strategist and inspired tactician, through the application of his military might, he secured control of other clans and assimilated them into his kingdom. Shaka's strategy and tactics reside with both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. Shaka's execution of close combat warfare and mass concentration of his *amabuthos* is Clausewitzian in nature. His reliance on intelligence, deception, surprise, offense, and defense reminds one of Sun Tzu. In building his kingdom, Shaka relied heavily on the manpower of newly incorporated clans. Armed with his tactics, Shaka's army was never afraid to strike hard and fast, due to his instinctive grasp of field craft, which enabled him to turn the terrain to his advantage.<sup>75</sup> Shaka's reforms enabled the Zulu army to operate as a swift, effective military machine, conquering powerful rulers like king Zwide.<sup>76</sup> Beginning with 100 square miles of

---

<sup>73</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 63.

<sup>74</sup>Knight, *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army*, 32.

<sup>75</sup>Knight, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa*, 44.

<sup>76</sup>Kuene, *Emperor Shaka the Great*, 21

territory, Shaka, in two plus years, extended the Zulu Empire over 7,000 square miles.<sup>77</sup> Over a period of twelve years, Shaka created a powerful kingdom with an army that was feared throughout southern Africa. However, at the height of his success, his half-brother Dingane and his accomplices betrayed and murdered Shaka in 1828.<sup>78</sup>

### Were Shaka's Innovations Long Lasting?

Shaka's art of war featured rapid movements and his regiments' ability to quickly mass on the battlefield. His ability to mass his regiments before his enemies realized the immediate danger was a result of his organizational structure, which facilitated speed and maneuverability. What Shaka lacked in numbers, he made up for in speed. The speed of his regiments allowed him to concentrate his army and win decisive battles even when outnumbered by his opponents. Shaka's emphasis on speed was the basic feature in his campaigns from the beginning to end. Maneuvers consisted of Shaka's various ways of deploying his bullhorn regiments to seize and exploit the initiative. Arguably, all of Shaka's campaigns had clear objectives and involved offensive operations. Being on the offense aided his art of war by allowing him the flexibility of surprise and security (protection) against the possibility of being surprised by the enemy. He displayed economy of force in his ability to use all his available forces effectively and mass its concentration at a critical point.

Shaka's military campaigns took advantage of strategic and tactical principles of warfare that includes mass, speed, maneuver, offense, security, and economy of force. The Zulu leaders who followed him after his death adopted his system of organization and the strategic and tactical principles of warfare he employed. The innovations created by Shaka were so successful that it remained the main offensive tactics the Zulus employed until the British defeated them with their

---

<sup>77</sup>Ritter, *Shaka Zulu: The Biography of the Founder of the Zulu Nation*, 171.

<sup>78</sup>Lock and Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, 53.

own superior military technology. The Zulu's greatest victory over the British occurred in 1879 at the battle of Isandlwana, fifty years after Shaka's death. The Zulu's victory over the British would not have been possible without the innovations and standards for military operations established by Shaka. Immediately after Shaka's assassination, Dingane proclaimed himself King and ruled the Zulu for ten years before engaging the Zulu in war with the Europeans (Boers) for the first time in Zulu history. Dingane, unlike Shaka, was no soldier, thus the Zulu army was no longer the same as in the days of Shaka. Dingane fought many indecisive battles with the Boers during his reign over land disputes until his death in 1840. Mpande, his half-brother, succeeded him with the aid of the Boers who performed a mock coronation proclaiming Mpande king of the Zulus and their great ally.<sup>79</sup>

Unlike Dingane, who tried to erase Shaka's legacy, Mpande upon seizing the throne realized that the Zulu still ruled over an alliance of regional chiefs. Knowing that these alliances between chiefs could become unreliable based on his affiliation with the Boers, King Mpande followed in Shaka's tradition, calling up all-boys of fourteen years and older in the Zulu Kingdom to his royal kraal. Like Shaka he organized them into age regiments, making them fiercely loyal to him rather than to their own chiefs. In doing so, Mpande hoped these new regiments would bring about the reunification of the Zulu nation.<sup>80</sup> However, his strategic and operational thinking was less imaginative and more cautious than that of Shaka.

Throughout his reign as the Zulu king, there was limited war except a minor civil unrest. In 1872, King Mpande died at age forty; Cetshwayo became king of the Zulus. King Cetshwayo's ambition was to be as powerful as Shaka. In Cetshwayo's eyes, the Zulu Kingdom had grown weak in the face of European settlers. He was determined to restore the Zulu Kingdom to the

---

<sup>79</sup>Lock and Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, 57.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

proud and fearsome force it had been in the days of Shaka.<sup>81</sup> It was during Shaka's reign that the Zulu Army emerged in a form that endured with some modifications by the kings who followed him.<sup>82</sup> By 1872, the basic weapons of the Zulu Army were those introduced by Shaka with the exception of a crescent-shaped battle-axe. From his royal throne, King Cetshwayo ruled over the Zulu Kingdom leading up to the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.

Cetshwayo's contribution to the Zulu army was the introduction of a smaller war shield that was sturdier and about four feet long and two feet wide.<sup>83</sup> In addition to a new war shield, Cetshwayo introduced muzzle-loader firearms carried by some of the Zulu soldiers. The majority of Zulu soldiers opposed firearms because they viewed it as a weapon that enabled cowards to kill the brave without awaiting his attack.<sup>84</sup> In general, the military's organization and doctrine that Shaka constructed sixty years earlier remained basically the same. In retrospect, it was Shaka's army that King Cetshwayo used to bring about one of the most dramatic defeats of the British Army suffered in all its colonial history.<sup>85</sup>

#### THE ZULU AND THE BRITISH WAR OF 1879

As the numbers of European settlers grew in southern Africa, their hunger for land brought them close to the Zulu Kingdom. As settlers encroached more and more on Zululand, armed clashes rose. The struggle now was about who would control the future of southern Africa: the European settlers or the Zulu King. In 1867, the British established a headquarters in the Transvaal area and declared it a British colony. This caused a dramatic shift in the balance of

---

<sup>81</sup>Lock and Quantrill, *Zulu Victory*, 60.

<sup>82</sup>Knight, *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army*, 32.

<sup>83</sup>CMDT S. Bourquin, "The Zulu Military Organization and the Challenge of 1879," *Military History Journal*, Vol 4 No 4 – Zulu War Centenary Issue, (January 1979), <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol044sb.html> (accessed 4 January 2014).

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Kunene, *Emperor Shaka the Great*, 23.



power between the native chieftains and the Europeans. In 1877, a bitter border dispute between the British and the Zulu along the Natal border broke out. By the middle of 1878, the British were poised to engage in war with the Zulus. The British desired to engage in warfare with the Zulus as a means to open Zululand for free trading and to force the Zulus to accept Britain's policies for southern Africa.<sup>86</sup>

Despite relying on primitive technology, the Zulus were able to achieve isolated victories against the British, armed even with their superior modern weapons. In their attempt to break up the Zulu Kingdom, the British lost two of eight major engagements against the Zulus at both Isandlwana and Hobane. In order to see why the battle of Isandlwana made the Zulu famous in the Western world, an analysis of the Zulu and British Armies at the most famous Zulu victory, Isandlwana, will be the focus of the next section.

### The British Invade Zululand

In 1878, the Zulus were the major military force in southern Africa, and the British felt their colonies of Natal and Transvaal threatened by the Zulu military strength. The British determined that the Zulu's military power is what held the kingdom together. It also enabled the Zulu king, Cetshwayo, to maintain control over southern Africa. As clashes on the border between Natal residents and the Zulu continued, the British seized upon the opportunity and presented an ultimatum for the Zulu king to disband his (*amabutho*) aged regiments.<sup>87</sup> The British gave the Zulu king twenty days to comply or they would invade the Zulu kingdom. Putting his fate in the army that had passed down from Shaka, Cetshwayo dismissed the British ultimatum, and on 11 January 1879, the British invaded the Zulu territory with three columns.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup>Knight, *The Zulus*, 31.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

### The Zulu and British Armies

From his intelligence network, King Cetshwayo knew the precise strength and intention of the British force that invaded the Zulu kingdom.<sup>89</sup> The British invaded Zululand from the Natal and Transvaal borders in order to reach and capture the Zulu capital of Ulundi. Each column consisted of two battalions of British infantry, one artillery battery, African auxiliaries, and a number of irregular cavalry units.<sup>90</sup> Morale and confidence of the British was high and an easy victory was expected. However, the British main column of nearly 5,000 troops and 1,500 oxen made slow progress resulting in a decrease of their morale as they traveled deeper into Zulu territory. The standard British tactical units were the infantry battalion, consisting of 800 men in eight companies. Soldiers carried the single-shot Martini-Henry breech-loading rifle and bayonet and they still wore the trademark red jacket with foreign service helmet.<sup>91</sup> The British employed 400 native troops from Natal to fight their traditional Zulu enemy.<sup>92</sup> One in ten native troops had a firearm while the rest carried their traditional shield and spears.

The Zulu army's primary weapon and battle tactics remained unchanged from the time of Shaka's rule. However, since the 1860s, the Zulus had acquired firearms, but the majority of the firearms were muzzle-loaders. The soldiers who carried them did not receive training on how to effectively engage with their firearms in battle or how to operate the sights correctly.<sup>93</sup> With the growth of the Zulu army over the years, regiments sometimes were grouped into corps. An

---

<sup>89</sup>John Laband, "Zulu Strategic and Tactical Options on the Face of the British Invasion of January 1879," *Science Militaria: South Africa Journal of Military Studies* Vol. 28, No. 1, 1988, <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za/>(accessed 11 January 2014).

<sup>90</sup>Knight, *Isandlwana 1879*, 26.

<sup>91</sup>The Martini-Henry rifle had a range of up to 1,500 yards, firing a .45-caliber bullet. Experienced riflemen carried a standard 70 cartridges and could fire off up to 12 rounds per minute.

<sup>92</sup>Knight, *The Zulus*, 43.

<sup>93</sup>Laband, "Zulu Strategic and Tactical Options on the Face of the British Invasion of January 1879," 11.

experienced commander (*Induna*) led each regiment, and a senior regimental commander guided a corps.<sup>94</sup> As in the days of Shaka, the Zulu Army carried few supplies and was highly mobile, but the army could not remain in the field for long. This made it difficult for Cetshwayo to exploit his advantage of knowing the British strength and the terrain, which allowed his army to move undetected.<sup>95</sup> Knowing this, Cetshwayo sought to achieve an early and decisive Zulu victory in order to force the British to negotiate.

The Zulu knowledge of the terrain and their intelligence network enabled them to watch every move the British made. This allowed the Zulu to employ deception tactics and target the British lines of supplies that were in their rear while they waited for the right opportunity to attack. The Zulu strategy was to engage the British in open field; this would allow the Zulu to envelope British troops using Shaka's bullhorn tactics and overwhelm British troops in close combat fighting with their numerically superior forces.<sup>96</sup>

In an attempt to locate the main Zulu Army, the British commander sent scouts forward in all directions. After ten days of searching for the Zulu main army, the British soldiers decided to camp in the shadow of a large hill known as Isandlwana, deep in Zulu territory. The British army's slow progress and no sight of the Zulu army sapped their morale. At 0400, January 22, the British commander decided to split his forces. The forces left behind made few defensive preparations, tents and soldiers were strung out across the plains. Unknown to the British, the Zulu army of twenty thousand men was less than four miles away from their campsite. By midday, a mounted British scout stumbled upon the Zulu Army, and the Zulu Army set off in pursuit of the British scouts who led them to the campsite.

---

<sup>94</sup>Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, 361.

<sup>95</sup>Knight, *The Zulu*, 45.

<sup>96</sup>Laband, "Zulu Strategic and Tactical Options on the Face of the British Invasion of January 1879," 9.

### Zulu War Tactics versus the British Modern Army

The Zulu Army positioned themselves in the bullhorn formation. They attacked the British from three sides. The Zulu sought to fight at close range with the bullhorn tactics that put them at a great disadvantage against the European firepower range. The British opened fire at long range using the new breach-loading Martini-Henry rifles and artillery. The British firepower pinned down the chest of the bullhorn formation causing the Zulu advance to stall. The left horn of the Zulu advance was able to break through the British defense and race through into the British rear. Although Zulu tactics remained largely unchanged from the time of Shaka to 1879, it seems likely that Zulu soldiers' maneuver from cover to cover had only been practiced since acquiring firearms.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, British mounted troops could only offset the speed at which Zulu soldiers moved by a degree. According to Bourquin, Zulu soldiers were faster than the British mounted troops over broken terrain.<sup>98</sup> At first, British guns caused high casualties against the Zulus, who needed to be in close tactical range for their short spears to be effective.

As the battle developed, British rifles began to overheat causing them to misfire. The Zulus seized the opportunity by maneuvering quickly and simultaneously engaged the British with their shields and spears from three sides. In less than two hours, almost 1,500 British soldiers from the 24th Regiment were dead except for the eight that somehow managed to evade the Zulu attack. As in the days of Shaka, the Zulu army fought with the utmost bravery, fighting as their laws demanded – the king's laws.<sup>99</sup> The British superior technology could not repel the Zulu Army in the open field. The horns of the bullhorn tactics effectively surrounded the British position. Despite sustaining heavy losses due to the British firepower, the Zulu massed their

---

<sup>97</sup>Knight, *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army*, 212.

<sup>98</sup>Bourquin, "The Zulu Military Organization and the Challenge of 1879," <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol044sb.html> (accessed 4 January 2014).

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

superior numbers in time and space. As a result, military tactics developed by Shaka prevailed, and the Zulus won a decisive battle against the British.

In the battles that followed over the course of the next six months between the British and the Zulu Army, the Zulu assegai, shield, and close rank tactics could not sustain the British rifles and artillery. The Anglo-Zulu War was the first to destroy the Zulu army since Shaka created it. The British captured King Cetshwayo in August 1879 and ended the war. With the Zulu King exiled to Cape Town, the Zulu Kingdom was broken up into thirteen districts and divided amongst chieftains.

The Anglo-Zulu War was a resistance against colonial rule. During the Anglo-Zulu War, King Cetshwayo sought to win a decisive victory using Shaka's time-honored tactics against a technologically far superior opponent. The time-honored tactics of Shaka proved to be a liability to the Zulu army and the Zulu Kingdom. Part of the Zulu's failure resided in their lack of desire to develop new tactics like neighboring clans who had adopted new technologies and tactics over the years, and by the 1870s, were adept with guns and horses in waging irregular warfare.<sup>100</sup> The Zulus' discipline, weapons, tactics, and courage were no match against British troops armed with superior technology.

## CONCLUSION

Shaka Zulu was a gifted military genius who possessed rare qualities that enabled him in establishing Zulu dominance in southern Africa. His operational approach to war was bloody, based on speed, and sought a decisive engagement, which was a drastic change from traditional African warfare. Shaka's level of understanding of strategy and his natural ability to use tactics in the field as it related to the arrangement of military force in time and space is reminiscent of

---

<sup>100</sup>Laband, "Zulu Strategic and Tactical Options on the Face of the British Invasion of January 1879," 10.

operational art. His operational approach and organization created an asymmetrical situation between Shaka and his enemies that gave Shaka a distinct advantage. The organization of his army provided him with operational flexibility, the likes of which had never been experienced before in southern Africa. Shaka used strategy in setting his objectives and tactics as the tool for fighting. As a strategist and an inspired tactician, Shaka used war as the primary means of achieving his political objectives of expanding his territory and unifying the Zulu clans.

To make his system of warfare function, Shaka had several tools other than his own genius: a sophisticated organizational structure, technological innovations, logistical system, and intelligence network. When planning for war Shaka left nothing to chance, he gathered all sources of information on his enemy. He then began to develop a mental picture of the opposing army and the terrain. In a series of military campaigns from the late 1810s until his death in 1828, Shaka defeated all major clans in southern Africa in his quest to establish a unified nation. His military innovation brought changes in weapons and military tactics, resulting in a bloodier form of warfare that was new to southern African society. In assessing his effectiveness and great military achievements, many historians refer to Shaka as the “black Napoleon of Africa.”<sup>101</sup> However, unlike Napoleon and other leaders such as Alexander the Great, who had existing armies and weapons, Shaka had to create his army and weapons.

At the point of his assassination in 1828, virtually all armies in southern Africa were using his tactics.<sup>102</sup> Following his death, other Zulu leaders emulated Shaka’s system of organization, tactics, and the strategies he employed. These tactics were so successful that they remained the main offensive tactics employed by the Zulus until their defeat at the hands of the

---

<sup>101</sup>Dan Wylie, *Myth of Iron: Shaka in History* (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 186

<sup>102</sup>“Great African Military Leaders: Shaka of the Zulu Nation,” <http://kwanzaaguide.com/2010/11/great-african-military-leaders-shaka-of-the-zulu-ation/> (accessed 26 October 2013).

British in 1879. Shaka was a transformative leader whose legacy remains a model to emulate.

Shaka Zulu provided a blueprint for mastering the complexity of military affairs through tactics and effective strategy that is reminiscent of what is today considered operational art.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Black, Jeremy, ed. *War in the Modern World, 1815-2000*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Bourguin, CMT S. "The Zulu Military Organization and the Challenge of 1879," *Military History Journal*, 4 no. 4 – Zulu War Centenary Issue – (January 1979).  
<http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol044sb.html> (accessed 4 January 2014).
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated and edited. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- "Great African Military Leaders: Shaka of the Zulu Nation," 29 November 2010,  
<http://kwanzaaguide.com/2010/11/great-african-military-leaders-shaka-of-the-zulu-ation/>  
 (accessed 26 October 2013).
- Knight, Ian J. *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa: Shaka of the Zulu, Moshoeshoe of the Basotho Mzilikazi of the Matabele, Magoma of the Xhosa*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 1995.
- Knight, Ian. *Brave Men's Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War*. London: Greenhill Books, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Isandlwana 1879: The Great Zulu Victory (Campaign)*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army: from Shaka to Cetshwayo, 1818-1879*. London: Stackpole Books, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The National Army Museum Book of the Zulu War*. London: Pan Macmillan, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Zulus*. London: Osprey Publishing 1989.
- Kunene, Mazisi. *Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic*. Unesco Collection of Representative Works. African Authors Series. London etc.: Heinemann, 1979, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/emperor-shaka-great-zulu-epic-mazisi-kunene> (accessed 4 January 2014).
- Kuper, Adam. "The House and Zulu Political Structure in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of African History* 34, no.3, 1993.
- Laband, John. *The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation*. London: Arms & Armor, 1997.
- Laband, John, "Zulu Strategic and Tactical Options on the Face of The British Invasion of January 1879. *Science Militaria, South Africa Journal of Military Studies*, 28, no. 1(1988), <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za> (accessed 4 January 2014).
- Lamar, Howard and Leonard Thompson ed., *The Frontier in History: North America and South Africa Compared*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Lamphear, John. *African Military History*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.
- Lock, Ron, and Peter Quantrill. *Zulu Victory: The Epic of Isandlwana and the Cover-Up*. London: Greenhill Books, 2002.



- Morris, Donald R. *The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation under Shaka and Its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1998.
- Ritter, E. A. *Shaka Zulu: Rise of the Zulu Empire*. 7th ed. London: Longmans, 1962.
- Ritter, E. A. *Shaka Zulu: The Biography of the Founder of the Zulu Nation*. London: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Roberts, Brian. *The Zulu King*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974.
- Sun-Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Ralph D. Sawyer. Boulder: Basic Books, 1994.
- US Army, Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.
- Wylie, Dan. *Myth of Iron: Shaka in History*. Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006.